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SUBJECT: COORDINATION DIFFICULT FOR NIGERIAN ANTI-TIP
AUTHORITIES

Classified By: Consul General Brian Browne for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

1. (U) Summary. Coordinating efforts to combat trafficking in persons, both among government agencies and NGOs, is one of the stiffest challenges facing the GON. State police commands are hesitant to relinquish primary investigative jurisdiction rights to the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking and Other Related Matters (NAPTIP), and top-level immigration officials compete with NAPTIP for FG and international funds earmarked for trafficking purposes. Additionally, NGOs appear to be expanding their mandate, often outside their areas of expertise in order to attract funds. Special Assistant to the President on Trafficking, Dayo Akinmoyo, requested USG assistance in establishing a system to better coordinate GON and civil society anti-trafficking efforts. End Summary.

NAPTIP Builds Centralized Trafficking Database

2. (U) With assistance from the International Labour Organization (ILO), NAPTIP recently equipped their National Monitoring Center with V-SAT capability to maintain a national database of trafficking reports, making information more quickly available to investigators and prosecutors. The database can be updated via world-wide web by all relevant law enforcement agencies, NGOs, and international organizations.

3. (U) While creation of the database represents a significant step in NAPTIP's capacity to collect and report data and statistics, it does not mean that the interagency cooperation necessary to ensure its continued accuracy exists. Until mid-2005, for instance, NAPTIP maintains that State police commands never submitted an entire trafficking file, including case report, victim records, and suspect information; since then, only one such file has been received by the NAPTIP.

4. (C) The Special Assistant to the Minister of Justice told us the Ministry still finds itself arbitrating jurisdictional disputes between NAPTIP and state police, who want control over crimes for which suspects are charged and their punishment. When the Cross River State police found 40 children in a bus headed for forced labor in Cameroon (reftel), the police did not hand over the perpetrators to NAPTIP until the Ministry of Justice intervened. In another notable case, the Kwara State governor did not want to hand a trafficker over to NAPTIP because he felt the crime was minor.

Trafficking Shelter Houses Few Victims Despite Daily Influx

5. (U) The Lagos State Deputy Comptroller for Immigration, M. Obot, characterized interceptions of trafficking victims at the Mohammed Murtala International Airport and at the Seme land border with Benin Republic as "daily occurrences." NAPTIP's nearby Lagos shelter for trafficking victims, however, rarely utilizes more than 10% of its 120-bed capacity. Obot explained that victims were often kept at State Command headquarters for up to two days and preferably returned to their families if identities could be ascertained. The registration book at the Lagos shelter showed most referrals in the month of November were from Immigration or an NGO, the Women's Consortium of Nigeria (WOCON).

6. (U) By contrast, the small 8-bed shelter at NAPTIP headquarters Abuja is always full, and additional victims are housed at a shelter administered by the Women Trafficking and Child Labor Eradication Foundation (WOTCLEF), a local NGO active in finding and assisting trafficking victims. Founded by V.P. Atiku's wife, WOTCLEF is now planning to build a 1,000-bed rehabilitation center to cope with the needs of victims.

Need for Better Coordination Recognized by GON and IOs

17. (U) A representative of ILO's Program Against Trafficking in West Africa (PATWA) mentioned to us the lack of coordination between law enforcement agencies was the most urgent problem facing the GON in its battle against trafficking. Dayo Akinmoyo, the Special Assistant to the President on Trafficking, agreed. She noted that funding for anti-trafficking efforts had originally been a part of the immigration service's budget, and the creation of NAPTIP moved these resources out of immigration and caused many squabbles.

18. (U) Akinmoyo further noted that this coordination problem was mirrored among NGOs, which often duplicated services or often began to work in areas of assistance where they had no discernible expertise but where outside funding was available. She requested assistance in creating a network of NGOs with specific priorities, e.g., Counseling and Rehabilitation or Law Enforcement Sensitization. Through a division of labor, the strengths of each NGO would then be properly utilized, she argued. Akinmoyo asked that the USG restructure even its recent \$18,000 TIP small fund grant to address this coordination problem.

Comment

19. While NAPTIP is on the right track, various law enforcement agencies need to accept and adhere more fully to the current anti-trafficking organizational chart for the agency to succeed fighting trafficking. This same observation was made in the recent Chemonics report commissioned by USAID. Future assistance should go to programs that promote interagency cooperation and coordination. WOTCLEF has begun to answer Akinmoyo's call for NGOs to be similarly specialized and coordinated, but they will also need assistance in order to be successful.
End Comment.
BROWNE